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Kansas -
The Leecompton Constitution
Speech of
Hon. Emory B. Pottle,
of New York.



Class F685

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KANSAS--THE LECOMPTON CONSTITUTION.

S P E E C H

OF

HON. EMORY B. POTTLE, OF NEW YORK.

Delivered in the House of Representatives, March 22, 1858.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Before the vote shall be taken which will either leave the people of Kansas the control of that Territory, or, denying the right of self-government, compel them to submit to laws to which they never gave their assent, and to institutions which they loathe and protest against, I desire the indulgence of the Committee for the brief time allotted, that I may place upon your records the fact—important to me, it to no one else—that in all the stages of this Kansas matter, I have, to the extent of my constitutional right, opposed this contemplated outrage upon a portion of our people.

Sir, I have not the foolish vanity to suppose that anything which I can say will change a vote upon this question, for I suppose that every member of this House has already in his own mind settled the question as to his vote upon this measure, according to the dictates of his conscience, or under the influence of surrounding circumstances.

If there were some voice among us potent enough to hush the jarring elements, and restore us to that harmony which once characterized the Representatives of the various sections, it would indeed be well. But, sir, I doubt that any one will be found able to hush the wild storm of passion which has taken possession of the public mind; surely not, unless we can better understand one another, and the points upon which we differ. Bound together by the ties of common brotherhood, and with a history which proves that our Union has thus far proved a success almost or quite unexampled, we yet meet here day by day, with feelings more embittered than we ever felt against the people of any other Government, even in times of war. And it would seem as though we had indeed reached that point of our history when the strength of this Confederacy was to be severely tried; that period when the antagonism between our two systems of labor, free and slave, will no longer be put off. Compromises have been resorted to, in order to delay this struggle, until they have been exhausted and discarded by all parties. This is a struggle which is not confined to Kan-

sas. It neither began there, nor is it likely to end there. It began with the Government, has kept pace with it, and will not be likely to end until there is nothing left to struggle for. Nor do I think that it is a mere struggle for political power. That may be a means of its progress, but is neither its cause nor its end. I believe, sir, if the Union were to-day dissolved, that this struggle would still go on, and wax fiercer from that very cause. It is one of the evidences that the world moves, and that progress is slowly, surely, and certainly, undermining and sweeping away those old abuses which deny to labor its proper reward, and to man that dignity to which he is by nature entitled.

In my judgment, sir, it only remains for us to say whether that struggle shall be peaceful, and according to the ordinary course of events, or otherwise. The immediate point of this contest now presented, is whether Kansas shall be now admitted into the Union, or rather, to speak more properly, *forced* into the Union, under the Lecompton Constitution. Now, sir, the question of Slavery is certainly not the only one which the people of a new State have the right to pass upon, in framing for themselves a Constitution; nor are they bound to accept a Constitution until it shall, upon that and all other questions, be in accordance with *their* wishes. Yet I think none will dissent when I say, that if it had not been for this question of Slavery, the people of Kansas would have been left unmolested to settle and arrange their affairs in their own way, and would have come into the Union in proper time almost without question.

Now, sir, I desire to say, and I wish to be distinctly understood, here and elsewhere, that while I am opposed to Slavery as a great political and moral evil, determined to oppose and resist it whenever I have the right so to do, there is not one constitutional right, one guarantee, which State sovereignty has thrown around this institution, which I have ever sought, or which I now seek, to interfere with.

As I said, I look upon Slavery as a great wrong to the black man, and equally so to the white

man, whose labor and political rights are affected by it; but I have looked upon it, and still look upon it, as a question which belonged to the States where it is, and not to me. Deeply exploring its existence anywhere, and hoping for the time when those having the right to put an end to it would see how much it was for their interest to do it, I have been willing to leave it there and to them. I speak, sir, for no one but myself and that constituency whose opinions I mean faithfully to represent; but I believe that, in the position just stated, I share a common feeling with the party of which I claim to be a member.

Sir, I desire just here to say one word in regard to the charge so often made, here and elsewhere, that this party is *sectional*; that it has for its object interference with Slavery, in violation of its rights under the Constitution, and in defiance of the sovereignty of the States. These are charges easily made, but not so easy to sustain. If gentlemen who make them would but take the trouble to look into the platform of the Republican party, they would meet with greater success than I have, if they could there find anything to sustain these charges. The first resolution of that platform is, in substance, that the maintenance of the principles of the Declaration of Independence and of the Federal Constitution is essential to the preservation of republican institutions; and that the Federal Constitution, the rights of the States, and the Union of the States, shall be preserved. The second resolution contains a denial of the right that Slavery can, under the Constitution, be established in the Territories. The third, that Congress has, under the Constitution, authority to govern the Territories, and is bound to prohibit Slavery therefrom. The fourth recites, substantially, the "bill of rights," and its infringement in Kansas. The fifth, the right of Kansas to be admitted into the Union under the Constitution which the people of that Territory had adopted. The sixth takes ground against the doctrines of the Ostend manifesto; the seventh, in favor of a Pacific railroad; the eighth, in favor of the improvement of rivers and harbors for certain purposes; and the ninth, an invitation to *free men* of all parties to unite and uphold the principles above set forth. And this is all.

Now, sir, I call upon the gentlemen, one and all, who make these charges, to inform the House and the country upon which of these they base the charge that the Republican party is a sectional party. Let us, Mr. Chairman, have the specifications. Let us have the proof. Sir, I ask you, and I ask the members who make these charges, if there is anything upon the subject of the rights of Slavery in this platform, that was not to be found in the platform of that party upon which the honorable member from Georgia [Mr. STEPHENS] stood and battled so long and so well?—upon which a score of honorable members from the slave States, whom I now see around me, fought so valiantly? Were these gentlemen, during all these years, standing upon a sectional platform, and one at war with the principles of the Constitution? No, sir; the

charge is not true. The Republican party stands to-day upon a platform as broad as the Constitution, and no more. It is opposed to Slavery under the Constitution, and only under it. Its principles embrace and guaranty the right of every section of the Union under the Constitution; and if you have denied it a hearing in one-half of the Union, it is because its principles are national, and conflict with the sectional dogmas that have taken possession of that section—dogmas which admit of no right but Slavery—no nationality but Slavery—no Constitution but Slavery—no Democracy but Slavery. And because we will not subscribe to this new revelation, we are called sectional and fanatics. Because we stand by principles as old as the Government, and much older, you say we are inflicting wrongs upon the South. Mr. Chairman, I tell you, and I tell gentlemen, that I am not here with an intention to inflict a wrong upon any section of the country; and if gentlemen, instead of asserting it, will show me facts to prove that by my action I interfere with the constitutional rights of any section, I pledge myself not only to desist, but, by my future action, to make such reparation for the past as I can.

I have listened long and with attention to the many eloquent gentlemen from the slaveholding section of the country, who have spoken upon the question of admitting Kansas under the Lecompton Constitution, but I have yet to learn the wrongs which it is said we of the North have inflicted and are seeking to inflict upon them. And yet, these wrongs are said to be so flagrant that if we persist in them the South cannot an will not longer remain in the Union. I am exceedingly anxious to preserve the Union. I have been taught to love it; and I believe I can truly say, in the language used by my colleague, [Mr. BURNBOUGHs,] the other day, that "if need be, am ready to lay down my life in its defence. But, sir, I do not expect it to stand, and, further, I do not desire it to stand, unless upon the broad principles of justice, and with a full and constant recognition of the rights of all the parties who compose it.

When, now or hereafter, instead of protecting the rights of all, it is found that it has become the means of oppression to a portion, then, sir, say, let the oppression cease; let the rights of be respected, or let the Government end—peaceably or forcibly; let it give place to one who will better accomplish the purposes for which Governments are instituted.

If I have correctly understood gentlemen and their charges against the North, they are, that we are seeking to deprive the South of its just share in the Government; that we are endeavoring to compel them to take a position subordinate to us. If, at any time, there has been any disposition upon the part of the North to accomplish this, it should, in fairness to all parties, be admitted that we have, thus far, met with very indifferent success; and that, as far as holding offices under the Federal Government is concerned, the charge would much more properly come from the other side. Sixty years the Government has substantially been in the hands an

under the control of the slaveholders. If you look at the amount of territory which each section has acquired, (that of the slaveholding section nearly or quite doubling that of the free States,) you will be forced to the same conclusion; that is, that we, not you, ought to complain of being deprived of our "just share of the Territories." And yet gentlemen gravely tell us, (and look and act as though they were in earnest,) that we are depriving the South of her just share of the territory; and that, unless we cease to do so, the Union must and will come to an end.

Sir, I propose briefly to examine this question. I know that it has been many times done, and yet in these debates these old facts seem to be utterly forgotten or ignored. At the beginning of the Government, Slavery had no share in the territory not organized into States. It was confined to the States; looked upon as a local evil, which was soon to be got rid of; and was expressly prohibited from occupying the Territories, or any portion thereof. It was the settled policy of all sections to prevent it from spreading.

If proof were needed for facts so commonplace and widely known, it would only be necessary to refer to the "ordinance of 1787," and to the expressed opinions of every distinguished gentleman, North or South, who took such part in the formation of the Government as required the expression of an opinion upon that subject.

When subsequently we acquired additional territory, you requested that this policy should be abandoned; and then, as now, you threatened a dissolution of the Union unless your request should be acceded to on our part. We of the North asked, as we had the right, that the then settled policy should be adhered to. But a proposition was brought forward by a distinguished statesman of your section, to compromise by dividing the territory between us; and it was acceded to on our part—reluctantly, I confess; unwisely, I have never doubted; but still, it was agreed to. Our portion, as a part of the agreement, being forever devoted to Freedom; and yours—by far the better portion—was left free to you as to us. In that agreement you gained all that we yielded; we gained nothing; we simply reserved to a part of the territory that principle which before applied to the whole. You entered into that agreement as a fair compact between us—one which, as I have said, was made at your request; and whether, in your estimation of it at this time, you gained or lost, you were in honor, and by all the rules of fair dealing, bound to carry out its provisions. We have faithfully abided by all the obligations which it imposed upon us. How have you kept faith with us? I have no time to trace the history of bad faith and of wrongs on your part, and shall leave the compromises of 1850 and 1854 to answer my question. By the first, you obtained rights and defences for Slavery, which we believe were not intended by the Constitution; and by the other you have broken all faith upon this question, and by legislative enactments cancelled your agreement.

But gentlemen tell us that the Supreme Court

has decided that the compromise of 1820 was unconstitutional. I deny it, and appeal to the record of the court to sustain my assertion. I say that the Supreme Court has made no such decision. It is true that a partisan court, packed for the purpose, has so far forgotten what belongs to the power and dignity of a court, that individual members of it have passed out of the record before them, and given extra-judicial opinions to that effect—opinions as binding upon that question as if given by the same gentlemen at a political meeting, and no more so. By the repeal of the compromise of 1820 you threw open all the Territories to the occupation of Slavery. Starting with none, you acquired the right, in common with us, to all. Does this look like oppression on our part? Was this depriving you of your just share in the Territories? What was the plea under which this was accomplished? That the restriction was not democratic. That Congressional intervention, as you call it, was not democratic. That the true rule was to open the Territories to all sections, and allow the people occupying them to settle their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States. We, at the North, or a portion of us at least, took issue with you upon this question, and went to the people, and were beaten. And now, when we call upon you to carry out this principle which you have introduced into the Government of the Territories, and to which you have procured the sanction of the popular will; when we ask of you to abide by the will, again and again expressed, of the people of the Territory of Kansas, you refuse. You say that the popular majority in Kansas are factious. That to admit them into the Union under a Constitution of their own choice, which excludes Slavery, deprives you of your rights, and that they must be admitted under the Lecompton Constitution, or you can no longer remain with us in the Union.

Sir, if any gentleman shall say that I beg the question, and that this Lecompton Constitution is to be regarded as expressing the consent of the majority of the people of that Territory, I beg to remind this House of the preamble and resolutions upon this subject which the people of that Territory have placed upon our records, and which I desire to incorporate into and make a part of my remarks:

"Preamble and joint resolutions in relation to the Constitution framed at Lecompton, Kansas Territory, on the 7th day of November, 1857.

"Whereas a small minority of the people living in nineteen of the thirty-eight counties of this Territory, availing themselves of a law which enabled them to obstruct and defeat a fair expression of the popular will, did, by the odious and oppressive application of the provisions and partisan machinery of said law, procure the return of the whole number of the delegates to the Constitutional Convention recently assembled at Lecompton; and whereas, by reason of the defective provisions of said law, in connection with the neglect and misconduct of the authorities charged with the

'execution of the same, the people living in the remaining nineteen counties of the Territory were not permitted to return delegates to said Convention, were not recognised in its organization, or in any sense heard or felt in its deliberations; and whereas it is an axiom in political ethics, that the people cannot be deprived of their rights by the negligence or misconduct of public officers; and whereas a minority, to wit, twenty-eight only of the sixty members of said Convention, have attempted by an unworthy contrivance to impose upon the whole people of the Territory a Constitution without consulting their wish, and against their will; and whereas the members of said Convention have refused to submit their action for the approval or disapproval of the voters of the Territory, and in thus acting have defied the known will of nine-tenths of the voters thereof; and whereas the action of a fragment of said Convention, representing, as they did, a small minority of the voters of the Territory, repudiates and crushes out the distinctive principle of the Nebraska-Kansas act, and violates and tramples under foot the right and sovereignty of the people; and whereas, from the foregoing statement of facts, it clearly appears that the people have not been left 'free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way,' but on the contrary, at every stage in the anomalous proceedings recited, they have been prevented from so doing:

"Be it therefore resolved by the Governor and Legislative Assembly of Kansas Territory, That the people of Kansas, being opposed to said Constitution, Congress has no rightful power under it to admit said Territory into the Union as a State; and we, the representatives of said people, do hereby, in their name and on their behalf, solemnly protest against such admission.

"Resolved, That such action on the part of Congress would, in the judgment of the members of this Legislative Assembly, be an entire abandonment of the doctrine of non-intervention in the affairs of the Territory, and a substitution in its stead of Congressional intervention in behalf of a minority engaged in a disreputable attempt to defeat the will and violate the rights of the majority.

"Resolved, That the people of Kansas Territory claim the right, through a legal and fair expression of the will of a majority of her citizens, to form and adopt a Constitution for themselves.

"Resolved, That the Governor of this Territory be requested to forward a copy of the foregoing preamble and resolutions to the President of the United States, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and to the Delegate in Congress from this Territory.

G. W. DEITZLER,

"Speaker of the House of Representatives.

"C. W. BABCOCK,

"President of the Council.

"SECRETARY'S OFFICE,

"Lecompton, K. T., January 12, 1858.

"I certify the above to be a true copy of the

[L. S.] enrolled resolutions deposited in this office. HUGH S. WALSH, Clerk.

"Originated in the House of Representatives."
"C. F. CURRIER, Chief Clerk."

Sir, with this protest before us, how can it be said that the Lecompton Constitution legally expresses the will of the people of the Territory? That there has, in all its stages, been a large actual majority against it, is a fact which has been so fully established as to require no comment; indeed, I think it is not seriously denied, here or elsewhere. But the friends of this Constitution, including the President, say that if a Convention be duly elected, although by a minority of the people, and frame a Constitution, it is as binding upon the people as though all had voted; in other words, those who had a fair opportunity to vote, and yet refused or neglected to do so, are bound by the action of those who did vote. Sir, I have no fault to find with that position; it is one incident to our form of Government. But, while conceding this, I take occasion to say to the gentleman, and to the President, that this position cannot avail them here against the fact which they know, against the fact established, not only by the whole history of this Kansas difficulty, but also by the evidence taken by a committee sent there by Congress to inquire into that history. There never was a legal Convention to frame that Constitution. The Legislature which authorized the election of delegates to it was a fraud, and held their seats, not by the votes of the citizens of Kansas, but through the violence and ruffianism of those who never had been citizens of the Territory. The Legislature thus elected had no legal right to their seats, no power to order a Convention, and were only kept in their seats by the force of Federal troops. When they ordered the election of delegates, without the legal right so to do, there could be no obligation upon the people to recognise that order by voting; nor is it possible to fairly raise an intendment against them by reason of their refusal to sanction this outrage, not only upon their rights, but upon the principles which underlie our whole structure of Government.

But, sir, suppose, for the sake of the argument, we adopt the view of the friends of this Lecompton Convention. What then? Gentlemen tell us that there are many precedents where States have been admitted without referring the Constitution framed by the Convention to the sanction of the people. Granted; but, sir, I call upon them, one and all, to point to a precedent in this Government where a State was forced into the Union against its will; where a Constitution was ever forced upon the people of a State against the protest of a majority of that people. And yet that is precisely what is sought to be done in this case. Those who claim that the Convention was regular, cannot, will not, say that the Legislature which puts this protest upon our records is not also regular. If the Convention must be deemed as embodying the will of the majority of the people, are you not much more bound to say that the Legislature also represent-

ed and expressed the will of a majority of the people? And, sir, in the name of that majority, they protest against being brought into the Union under this Constitution. Now, sir, I ask by what precedent, by what reasoning, by what right, you can do this in a Government resting upon popular will—in a Union made up by the voluntary agreement of each new member that becomes a party to it?

I would like to have gentlemen explain. I desire to be informed in relation to this new creed of Democracy, which puts minorities in power, and compels majorities to submit against their *legally*-expressed will. Sir, there is but one answer; and if it were fairly given, it would be simply that Slavery, in its determined spirit of propagandism, defers to majorities when to its purpose, and overrides and disregards them when they conflict with its interests; heeds the will of majorities as it keeps compromises and compacts, *and that is just so long as it is for its interest, and no longer.* These are harsh and unpleasant truths, sir; but *truths*, nevertheless—truths which I take no pleasure in uttering, yet established so that neither I nor you can change or falsify the record if we would.

You say, with the President, that the country wants peace, and a stop to this excitement. So say we; but we want a peace founded upon justice, and none other could be obtained if we desired it. If you really desire such a peace, abide by your compacts, and we will abide by ours; abide by the principle of "popular sovereignty," which you have established, whether it works against you or for you, and not make complaints and threats at its results. We protested, as I have said, against the introduction of that principle into the Territories. But, sir, while it remains, we shall adapt ourselves to it, contest every inch of territory, and beat you in every one if we can.

You complain that we did all that we could to induce the emigration of those in favor of free principles into Kansas. We did so. We intend to do so in every one of the remaining Territories. We had and have the right so to do. You did the same thing in the same way in relation to emigration from your section of the country, and you are preparing to do it in relation to Arizona and the other Territories. It is your right; and we have not complained, and shall not, on our part, that you had not the right so to do. I repeat, sir, that this new way of settling the "domestic institutions" of the Territories is a spirit which you called up from the political depths to serve your purpose; and if it will not "down at your bidding," surely, complaint does not come from you with a good grace. It is true, we have more people to spare in the settlement of the Territories than you, and their position gives them greater facilities for emigration; but you knew that fact before you broke up the division line between us. You submitted the question as to what share Slavery should have in the Territories to the popular will; and if that popular will decides that you shall have none, where is the wrong or injustice in asking to abide the arbitrament of your choice?

Some gentlemen tell us that Slavery is a God-ordained institution, justified by the Holy Scriptures—the type of the highest civilization known; and that if we do not desist from our opposition to its spreading, the South intends to invade us with the sword in one hand, and a Bible in the other. Now, sir, I beg gentlemen of that section not to take offence at my interference in their preparation for this mighty onslaught, if I suggest to them that it would be better to leave their Bibles at home. We have a good many of those North now; and besides, sir, in such a district as that represented by the honorable gentleman from Georgia, [Mr. GARTRELL,] where he says there are fifteen thousand freemen—and I add, that to make up a congressional representation there must necessarily be about one hundred thousand slaves—it would be wise to leave your Bibles for the slaves, that they may read them, and be kept quiet by the knowledge that it is God's will that they should occupy their present position. After mustering the army, necessary to compete with the one hundred thousand freemen of my district, (if the gentleman will allow me to offset one district against the other,) I do not see what else he could leave to keep them quiet. Mr. Chairman, it may be that gentlemen are serious in these threats of war and dissolution of the Union; but they have been so often repeated in Congress, and have so often failed of fulfillment, that we must be excused if we do not at this time give to them that attention which their importance demands.

We were told the other day, by the honorable member from Virginia, [Mr. SMITH,] that "any State of this Union had a right to secede at pleasure." Without stopping to comment upon that position, the gentleman will pardon me if I inquire of him if he expects there will be a peaceable dismemberment of a Government like this? Does he believe that if we were, by common consent, to make the effort, we could separate our entangled interests so as to satisfy both parties?

But what, I ask, do gentlemen propose to gain by dissolution, supposing it could be peacefully accomplished? You have, by the compromise of 1854, got the right to all the territory, in common with us. A portion of this you would certainly lose. We now, in great part, support your mail service; that we should no longer do. We guard your frontier; that we should no longer do. We pay a very disproportionate part of the cost of the Government; you, alike with us, would be left to pay your own. We hold your millions of slaves in subjection to you, a service which we shall not regret to be absolved from. We return the fugitive which escapes to your service, except an occasional one, who prefers death to your higher civilization; and we not only return them, but we pay the expense of our own dishonor in this respect. Now, sir, it is very clear that, in a division, this business will be handed over to you. We shall neither perform it ourselves, nor allow you to do it upon our side of the line. And you surely do not expect to lessen our objections to human bondage by absolving us from all obligations to respect it

as a system, and from even indirectly yielding it support.

I tell the gentleman from Virginia, [Mr. SMITH,] and I tell honorable members who threaten disunion, that there will be no peaceable dismemberment of this Government, even if we endeavored so to have it; and the gentleman's colleague well said that, if disunion ever comes, it will not begin in Congress. It will begin, as other revolutions have begun, among the people. It will begin only when the conviction is *forced* upon the minds of the people, that the Government, in its corruption, has left them no hope of peaceable means of redress. It will not be hastily begun, nor even by the ordinary causes of popular outbreaks in other Governments. We are a law-loving, law-abiding people, North and South. I speak now, sir, of the people—the masses—and not of ambitious political leaders. Were it not so, we should now be deciding this question upon the battle-field.

But, sir, there is a point in this matter which it will be fatal to pass—a point upon which trembles the lives of millions of men. Should we ever unsheath the sword of civil strife, it will be no common feud. We are children of the same family, actuated by the same courage, as has been proved upon many a battle-field, feeling the same unyielding determination to stand by our rights, or fall in their defence. Sir, I believe that the page on which is recorded the history of that struggle (should it ever come) will be the reddest page which God has ever permitted to be written upon this earth. I hope, I pray, it may never come. But, sir, I may add, should it come, we of the North are not responsible for it; we have tried to keep peace; we have made sacrifices to this end which few people ever made; and we will not be responsible for its results. If you begin a revolution to spread Slavery, you should not complain if, like all other revolutions, it breaks the fetters of the slave, and lets up the oppressed. If you begin the war, and find in its results that your millions of slaves, hardly now held to subjection, shall rise up and enact upon you, your wives and children, the awful atrocities of British India, charge us not with the fault. We want peace, not war; union, not discord; brotherly feeling, not hatred. And we can have these only upon the terms of justice and fair dealing. Sir, as dearly as we prize these blessings, and great as are the sacrifices which we have made, and are willing to make, to obtain them, for one, I say—and I have well considered the words—rather than see a continuance of the wrongs and outrages, the frauds and villainies, which have been connived at and sustained by this Government in this matter of Kansas, I would prefer to see an end of the Government, and abide the result.

Mr. Chairman, the people of the North are not "negro worshippers," as they have been termed on this floor. Nor are they abolitionists. As I have already said, they dislike your institution, and believe it to be wrong in the sight of God, and unworthy of the civilization of our age and country. They would gladly *assist*—not *force*—you to abolish it where it now exists. But the

great objection with the masses of the North, and one which will ultimately unite them in the same manner to oppose its progress that the South is united to spread it, is the effect of this institution upon the growth and prosperity of the people—is its bearing as a question of political economy. These effects are no longer matter of doubt or speculation. Gentlemen may talk about the value of their annual product of cotton and sugar. What do such facts weigh against the comparison of States, side by side, in wealth, in population, in schools, in general intelligence, in all the comforts and blessings of life? Weigh Virginia against Pennsylvania, Kentucky against Ohio, and the slave States which have been admitted since the formation of the Government against the free States admitted within the same time, and answer the question for yourselves. There is no chance for mistake here; for in soil, in climate, in everything, you had the advantage; and yet, with all these, how far you have fallen behind! I do not deny but that your system gives, in individual instances, the very highest opportunity for improvement. The individual who reaps the unpaid toil of others may have, and will have, leisure and means for cultivation beyond that of him who toils for his support. But, sir, we hold that Governments were made for the good of *all*, and that one the best which consults the interest and happiness of all. In striving to keep the Territories free, we seek, not only the interests of the people of Kansas, but of free labor everywhere.

I know that we are told, by the honorable Senator from South Carolina, [Mr. HAMMOND,] that labor is servile, and laborers everywhere slaves. To make sure that I do him no injustice, I quote what the honorable Senator said on that point:

"In all social systems, there must be a class to do the mean duties, to perform the drudgery of life. That is, a class requiring but a low order of intellect and but little skill. Its requisites are vigor, docility, fidelity. Such a class you must have, or you would not have that other class which leads progress, refinement, and civilization. It constitutes the very mud-sills of society and of political government; and you might as well attempt to build a house in the air, as to build either the one or the other, except on the mud-sills. Fortunately for the South, she found a race adapted to that purpose to her hand—a race inferior to herself, but eminently qualified, in temper, in vigor, in docility, in capacity, to stand the climate, to answer all her purposes. We use them for the purpose, and call them slaves. We are old-fashioned at the South yet; it is a word discarded now by ears polite; but I will not characterize that class at the North with that term, but you have it; it is there; it is everywhere; it is eternal.

"The Senator from New York said yesterday that the whole world had abolished Slavery. Ay, the name, but not the thing; and all the powers of the earth cannot abolish it. God only can do it when he repeals the *fiat*, 'the poor ye always have with you,' for the man who lives

by daily labor, and scarcely lives at that, and who has to put out his labor in the market, and take the best he can get for it; in short, your whole class of manual laborers and operatives, as you call them, are slaves. The difference between us is, that our slaves are hired for life and well compensated; there is no starvation, no begging, no want of employment, among our people, and not too much employment either. Yours are hired by the day, not cared for, and scantily compensated; which may be proved in the most deplorable manner, at any hour, in any street, in any of your large towns. Why, sir, you meet more beggars in one day, in any single street of the city of New York, than you would meet in a lifetime in the whole South. Our slaves are black, of another, inferior race. The status in which we have placed them is an elevation. They are elevated from the condition in which God first created them, by being made our slaves. None of that race on the whole face of the globe can be compared with the slaves of the South, and they know it. They are happy, contented, unaspiring, and utterly incapable, from intellectual degradation, ever to give us any trouble by their aspirations.

"Your slaves are white, of your own race; you are brothers of one blood. They are your equals in natural endowment of intellect, and they feel galled by their degradation. Our slaves do not vote. We give them no political power. Yours do vote, and being the majority, they are the depositaries of all your political power. If they knew the tremendous secret, that the ballot-box is stronger than an army with bayonets, and could combine, where would you be? Your society would be reconstructed, your Government reconstructed, your property divided, not as they have mistakenly attempted to initiate such proceedings by meeting in parks, with arms in their hands, but by the quiet process of the ballot-box. You have been making war upon us to our very hearthstones. How would you like us to send lecturers or agitators North, to teach these people this, to aid and assist in combining, and to lead them?"

Sir, I tell you, and I tell the honorable Senator, that the very thing which he holds up to frighten us—viz: that those who labor will yet rule us—is what we have already accomplished; and therein lies the difference of our system of labor and that of the gentleman's section. With him, power in the hands of the laborer is his greatest dread; with us, it is our highest boast. In his section, the "mud-sills of society" are slaves, who would use power, if they had it, to repay long years of wrong and degradation; with us, the "mud-sills," the laboring men, are in power already, and using it, not to avenge injuries, but to perpetuate and increase blessings which are common to all. Labor, instead of being a stigma, is the proudest dignity which we know. With us, those only are dishonored who are the *drones* of society, and refuse to labor. Our laboring men, our "mud-sills," are representing themselves; the gentleman can meet them in the Senate, or here upon the floor of this Hall; and however much he may disallow their claims,

they will, here and everywhere, insist that they are the peers of all those who represent his system of labor.

The honorable gentleman from Georgia, [Mr. CRAWFORD,] who, I think, has made up the strongest case upon the Lecompton side, indulged in a course of remarks calculated to convey the impression that all the wrongs and outrages which had been perpetrated in Kansas were by the Free State men. From the high character which the gentleman sustains, I was prepared to hear from him a different statement, and I was not a little surprised when the gentleman dwelt so long and so pointedly upon our Northern "Emigrant Aid Society," and the combinations by Northern men in Kansas, that he omitted, possibly forgot, to mention Southern "emigrant aid societies" and "blue lodges," as connected with this Kansas history.

Sir, I do not intend to go over the history of these wrongs. The people of my section know them all, and those of your section would never see the evidence, were I to collect it. It has already been many times done more perfectly than I could do it, and presented in a way no hour speech can present it. But I have just received a letter from a distinguished citizen, until within a few months a resident of my district, and now a resident of Kansas, which, from his high standing, and from long years of untiring, unflinching support to whatever has been called "Democratic," will entitle it to credit in my district, if nowhere else. He, for years, shared the toil and the triumphs of that party; he was the supporter of Mr. Pierce and Mr. Buchanan, and he left his old home for the West with feelings toward the "Black Republicans" similar to those taken to Kansas by Reeder, Geary, Walker, and Stanton, and you will see by his letter that his conversion has been not less perfect than theirs:

"LEAVENWORTH CITY, Feb. 23, 1853.

"DEAR SIR: You may not know that I have been a resident of this place since May last. Supposing that the political storm which raged here with such fury had passed away, I came here with my family, together with Mr. Brown, (who married my youngest daughter,) with the intention of making this my future home. The end, however, it seems, is not yet. No man out of the Territory can form any just idea of the enormity of the wrongs to which the Free State people have been subjected. Very little reliance can be placed on the public press. To know the facts, a person must live here. The Free State people outnumber the rest of our population in the proportion of five to one; and yet, through the atrocious frauds committed on the ballot-box, we are never sure of securing our rights. By this time you will have seen something of this in the testimony taken by a committee, &c. We care nothing for what may be done by our opponents, if the ballot-box can be *secretly* secured to us. Until that right is secured, we are at the mercy of the most unscrupulous gang of marauders that Heaven ever suffered to live.

"You know I have always voted the Democratic ticket—one of the Hard-Shells of New York; but if the treatment we receive at the hands of Government be *Democracy*, I am no longer one of them, and from my inmost soul bid you and your Republican brethren God speed in any and all honorable means to hedge up their way in all attempts to violate the great principle on which the Kansas-Nebraska bill is based.

"This is a fine country, and when peace is restored, and the right shall prevail, will rapidly fill up, and ultimately become a first-class State.

"I shall be happy to hear from you, from time to time, at your leisure.

"With much respect, I am, dear sir, yours,
"JAMES TAYLOR.

"*Hon. E. B. Pottle.*"

Mr. Chairman, I have but few words to add in conclusion. I will only repeat, I desire peace; I desire that the present excitement shall pass away, and give place to that brotherly feeling which ought to exist between those of the same nation, of the same blood, and speaking the same language. War and strife is ever hateful, and doubly so when waged by members of a common family against each other. But, as I said, there will be no peace except it be founded in justice; fraud and violence never yet produced peace, and never will. They are ever the harbingers of strife and of war; and so will they prove, if a continuance of them is persisted in. The people of Kansas have patiently waited, and borne

wrongs which would have shaken any monarch in Europe from his throne. They have waited in hopes that finally they would be allowed the peaceful, constitutional remedy of the ballot-box, and thus put a stop to their oppressions. Compel them into the Union under this Constitution, and take from them that hope, and they will wait no longer. They will resist, I doubt not; and I think they will not be left to resist alone and unaided. The cause of constitutional right is the cause of millions who never saw Kansas.

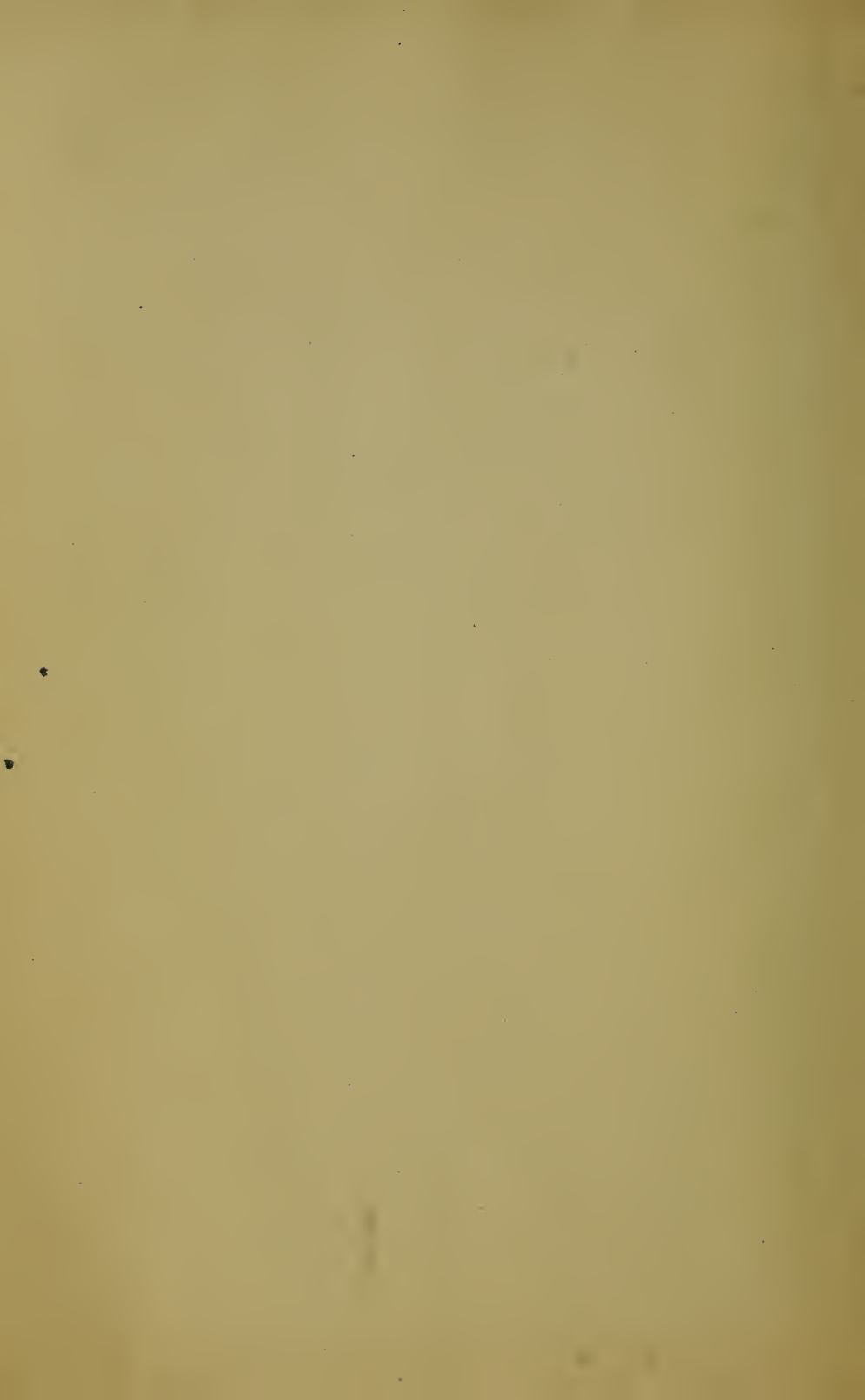
The honorable member from Georgia, already referred to, told us the other day that "the North, in this Kansas matter, had fought with a steadiness and zeal worthy of a better cause." Sir, I tell the gentleman, and all who seek to fasten this great wrong upon the people of Kansas, that, should they succeed, they will see a zeal and steadiness upon the part of the North hitherto unknown. They will yet come to realize that our "fanaticism" has already reached that point where we recognise no better, no holier cause than that of human liberty—no higher duty than opposition to fraud and oppression. They will come to know that, however we differ as to whether any more slave States shall, under any circumstances, be admitted into the Union, there is one point upon which we agree; and that is, that Slavery will not be allowed to add new States by fraud or by violence, without meeting our determined, unflinching, resistance; and from this position we cannot be driven by any threat of danger to the Union.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

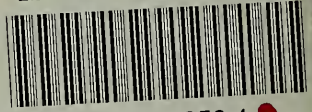
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